

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OAS, UR, AR, PN

SUBJECT: ARGENTINE VIEWS OF VIGNES US TRIP AND PROSPECTS FOR MFM

SUMMARY. ARGENTINA VERY PLEASED WITH RESULTS OF VIGNES TRIP TO US. BELIEVES TWO GOVTS SHOULD NOW COORDINATE CLOSELY TO INSURE A SUCCESSFUL MFM IN MARCH. END SUMMARY

1. FOLLOWING RETURN OF FOREIGN MINISTER VIGNES FROM US, EMBOFFS MET WITH FRANCISCO PULIT, CHIEF OF FOREIGN MINISTRY'S LATIN AMERICAN DIVISION, TO TRADE IMPRESSIONS ON RESULTS OF VISIT. PULIT SAID VIGNES AND ENTIRE GOA CONTINGENT WERE "EXTREMELY PLEASED AND SATISFIED" WITH THE RESULTS OF THE TRIP. HE NOTED THAT THE LEVEL OF CANDOR AND INFORMALITY ACHIEVED BY THE TWO SIDES, AND ESPECIALLY THE GENUINE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN SECRETARY KISSINGER AND VIGNES, WERE THE INTANGIBLE BUT IMPORTANT ELEMENTS ON WHICH WE COULD BOTH MAINTAIN OUR GOOD RELATIONS AND STEER THROUGH THE POTENTIAL PROBLEMS WHICH MAY ARISE IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS.

2. VIGNES, PULIT SAID, WAS ALSO "VERY ENCOURAGED" BY HIS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT FORD. THE PRESIDENT'S DESIRE TO REVIEW BILATERAL ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, ESPECIALLY TRADE PROBLEMS, WITH A VIEW TOWARD SEEKING SOLUTIONS WAS GRATIFYING TO GOA.

3. AS EXAMPLE OF HOW CANDID EXCHANGES OF VIEWS CONTRIBUTE TO
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OUR RELATIONS, PULIT CITED THE SUCCESSFUL JOINT HANDLING OF THE

COSTA RICAN INITIATIVE ON CUBA, WHICH, IN THAT IT ORIGINALLY SOUGHT A LEGAL APPROACH TO LIFTING SANCTIONS, MIGHT HAVE DEVELOPED INTO A DIVISIVE ISSUE. ONCE THE PRINCIPALS HAD FOCUSED ON THE KEY ISSUES AND EXCHANGED IDEAS ON HOW TO PROCEED, WORKING LEVEL OFFICIALS WERE ABLE TO TIE UP THE LOOSE ENDS IN A FEW HOURS AND SUCCESSFULLY DISPOSE OF THE PROBLEM. IN THE MONTHS AHEAD, WITH BOTH SIDES COMMITTED TO ACHIEVING A SUCCESSFUL MFM IN BUENOS AIRES, SIMILAR PRIVATE AND CANDID EXCHANGES WOULD ASSIST BOTH GOVERNMENTS IN REACHING THEIR COMMON GOALS.

4. TURNING TOWARD FUTURE AND THE MFM PULIT EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT PANAMA MIGHT, BY TRYING TO RAISE THE CANAL ISSUE, CREATE PROBLEMS FOR THE MFM. WHILE AT THIS POINT GOA WAS NOT SURE IF OR HOW PANAMA WAS GOING TO MOVE ON THE CANAL ISSUE, PULIT ASKED THAT BOTH GOVERNMENTS KEEP AN EYE ON THE MATTER AND CONSULT AGAIN IN A FEW WEEKS IF A PROBLEM SEEMS TO BE DEVELOPING. ALSO, CASTRO, WHO HAD BEEN "BEHAVING VERY WELL" UNTIL RECENTLY, HAD SURPRISED GOA WITH HIS RECENT ANTI-US SPEECH. GOA STILL THOUGHT CUBANS WOULD NOT UPSET PRESENT LATIN AMERICAN PLANS TO HAVE SANCTIONS LIFTED IN WAY WHICH WOULD NOT EMBARRASS US OR FORCE IT TO REACT TO CASTRO'S BOMBAST. AGAIN HE SUGGESTED WE REVIEW MATTER IN A FEW WEEKS.

5. EMBOFFS, NOTING THAT BOTH PRINCIPALS HAD STRESSED TO EACH OTHER THE NECESSITY FOR ACHIEVING POSITIVE RESULTS AT MARCH MFM, ASKED PULIT FOR A GOA DEFINITION OF "POSITIVE RESULTS". PULIT RESPONDED THAT WHILE PRESENT TALKS ON MULTI-NATIONAL COMPANIES, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, ETC WERE PROGRESSING SATISFACTORILY, THEY COULD NOT, BECASUE OF THE COMPLEXITIES INVOLVED, BE READY FOR RESOLUTION BY MARCH. WHAT THE GOA WANTED WAS SOME PROGRAM, NOT NECESSARILY ONE NOW ON THE LIST, WHICH COULD BE "RESOLVED" AT THE MFM AND AN "ACTION PROGRAM" COMMENCED. THE GOA IS CURRENTLY REVIEWING POSSIBLE ISSUE WHICH WOULD LEND THEMSELVES TO SUCH A SCENARIO. IN THIS REGARD, PULIT NOTED THAT HE AND EMBOFFS COULD AT INTERVALS IN NEXT FEW WEEKS EXCHANGE IDEAS ON POSSIBLE PROGRAMS FOR MFM. IN THIS WAY BOTH GOVTS COULD AT LOW-LEVEL INFORMALLY ASSESS THE OTHERS SUGGESTIONS, AND, WITHOUT EMBARRASSMENT TOEITHER, PUT ASIDE THOSE TO WHICH ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER OBJECTED. THOSE IDEAS THOUGHT BY BOTH TO HAVE MERIT COULD BE ELEVATED TO HIGHER LEVEL

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FOR MORE INTENSE DISCUSSIONS AND POSSIBLE ACTIONS. EMBOFFS TOLD PULIT HIS IDEA SEEMED AN EXCELLENT ONE, AND WOULD REPORT IT TO THEIR SUPERIORS. IN THIS REGARD, AND SPEAKING PERSONALLY, EMBOFF NOTED THAT EFFECTS OF OIL CRISIS WHICH WERE TAKING SEVERE TOLL ON ARGENTINA'S NEIGHBOR URUGUAY WAS A SUBJECT US UNDERSTOOD WAS ONE OF GREAT CONCERN TO GOA. SINCE PROBLEM OF ENERGY CRISIS WAS ONE OF HEMISPHERE-WIDE CONCERN IT MIGHT PERHAPS BE TYPE OF ISSUE WHICH SHOULD BE ADDRESSED. PULIT

SHOWED GREAT INTEREST IN SUGGESTION AND SAID THAT EVEN IF IDEA NOT FOUND SUITABLE FOR MFM IT WAS KIND OF WORKING-LEVEL EXCHANGE WHICH GOA HAD IN MIND. HE ADDED, "IN GREAT CONFIDENCE", THAT VIGNES PLANNED TO ATTEND THE ROME FOOD CONFERENCE AND WANTED TO DISCUSS CONCRETE PROPOSALS WITH SEC KISSINGER AT THAT TIME.

6. COMMENT: PULIT HAS BEEN IN ON MFM PROCESS FROM THE START. HE ATTENDED BOTH THE MEXICO CITY AND ATLANTA MEETING IN ADDITION TO ACCOMPANYING VIGNES IN HIS LATEST WASHINGTON TRIP. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBOFFS BEFORE LATEST TRIP HE PROVED TO BE WELL WIRED IN TO FOREIGN MINISTERS THINKING ON THE SENSITIVE ISSUES. THUS, EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT HIS SUGGESTIONS THAT WE EXCHANGE VIEWS INFORMALLY ON HANDLING OF MFM HAS HIGH LEVEL SUPPORT. WE BELIEVE THAT EXCHANGE SUGGESTED OFFERS GOOD CHANNEL FOR TRADING VIEWS AND WOULD BE WILLING TO FUNNEL DEPARTMENT'S IDEAS THROUGH PULIT AND OTHER APPROPRIATE FOREIGN MINISTRY CHANNELS, SUCH AS AMB JUAN MANUEL FIGUERERO, IF DEPT CONCURS.
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